



Module 6

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A Practical Guide to Teaching TraumatISED Children



THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

General Education Modules
for Upper Primary and Junior Secondary School Teachers
of Science, Technology and Mathematics by Distance
in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Developed by

The Southern African Development Community

Ministries of Education in:

- Botswana
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

In partnership with The Commonwealth of Learning

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GENERAL EDUCATION MODULES

This module is one of a series prepared under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and The Commonwealth of Learning as part of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Programme (STAMP 2000+). These General Education modules enable teachers to enhance their professional skills through distance and open learning. Many individuals and groups have been involved in writing and producing these modules. We trust that they will benefit not only the teachers who use them, but also, ultimately, their students and the communities and nations in which they live.

The eighteen General Education modules are as follows:

- Module 1: *Multigrade Teaching: Introduction to Multigrade Teaching*
- Module 2: *Multigrade Teaching: Classroom Organisation and Management*
- Module 3: *The Reading Process*
- Module 4: *Developing Reading Skills*
- Module 5: *Special Educational Needs: An Introduction to Teaching Traumatised Children*
- Module 6: *Special Educational Needs: A Practical Guide to Teaching Traumatised Children*
- Module 7: *Education Management Development: Part A*
- Module 8: *Education Management Development: Part B*
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A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING



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Module 6

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A Practical Guide to
Teaching Traumatised Children

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A Practical Guide to Teaching Traumatized Children

This is one of a series of modules in the General Education courses developed by Ministries of Education in the SADC region in cooperation with The Commonwealth of Learning.

Modules 5 and 6 have been designed to help you assist children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime to cope with their traumas.

While Module 5 is an introduction to working with children who have special educational needs and mainly focuses on teaching techniques, Module 6 provides practical tips that you can employ to help traumatized children. We hope that after studying this module, you as a teacher will be in a better position to understand how to identify and address the needs of these traumatized children.

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LEARNING TIPS

You will find the following tips helpful as you study this module.

- **Set aside some time each day to work on this module.** If possible, study at the same time and in the same place so you are comfortable with your study surroundings. Learning at a distance requires discipline and motivation.
- **Go through the module unit by unit.**
- **Note any words you do not understand.** Look them up in a dictionary or other reference source or discuss them with your colleagues.
- **Underline or highlight important passages.** Make summary notes in the margins of long passages. Writing will help you to remember the material. You may also choose to make diagrams that illustrate how different ideas are related or list the steps in a procedure or technique.
- As you work through this module, **keep in mind your learners and their educational needs** as well as your instructional goals and your subject matter. How will you apply what you are learning?
- Read the assignment instructions carefully. Then, **do all the self-assessment activities** before proceeding to the Suggested Answers section.
- **As you undertake each activity, relate it to the practice of teaching** and analyse how it will help you to enhance the teaching-learning situation. Always ask yourself how you could use this material.
- **Apply some of the suggested techniques to your teaching.** All suggestions may not be appropriate for your situation, but how will you know unless you try them? Keep a record of what techniques work and an explanation of why some techniques appeared to fail. What does not work now may work later with different students.
- It may be difficult, but try to **meet occasionally with other teachers** to discuss the content and application of suggestions provided in this module.
- If you experience difficulty in understanding some aspect of the module, do not despair! You are meant to be challenged. **Do not give up!** Just remember that your goal is to be the best teacher that you can be. Think of what you would tell a student who was experiencing difficulty in your classroom. Then, apply the same advice to yourself.

ICONS

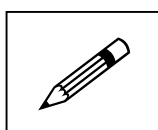
Throughout each module, you will find the following icons or graphic symbols that alert you to a change in activity within the module. Only the icons that are required are used in each module.



Text or Reading Material: provides information about the topics that are covered in a module. The subject matter for each SADC module is organised into units.



Introductory Activity: requires you to focus on the content that will be discussed in a unit.



Self-Assessment: enables you to check your understanding of what you have read and, in some cases, to apply the information presented in the unit to new situations.



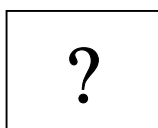
Practice Activity: encourages you to review and apply what you have learned before taking a unit test.



Reflection: asks you to relate what you have learned to your work as a teacher or education officer in your community.



Summary: highlights or provides an overview of the most important points covered in a unit.



Unit Test: concludes each unit.



Suggested Answers: allow you to evaluate your learning by providing sample answers to assessments, activities and the unit test.

UNIT 1: Attitudes



Introduction

As a teacher, you are aware that attitude can play an important role in the learning process. You know that students with a positive attitude can accomplish tasks that they may not have accomplished if their attitude remained negative. Also, you may have realised that the attitudes of parents and teachers can affect the learners' willingness to learn and to overcome challenges. In this module, we will explore how the attitudes of various groups may affect learning of children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define attitudes.
2. Discuss the importance of attitude change.
3. Evaluate parental attitudes towards children with special educational needs.
4. State factors contributing to teacher attitudes.
5. Explain strategies for improving teacher attitudes.

Definition of Attitude

Your duty as a teacher of children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime is to help them change their attitude about themselves and the world around them. An **attitude** can be defined as an internal state that influences the choice of personal action made by an individual (Gagne, 1985). Attitudes describe how people feel about an object, person, event or idea. This attitude can be acquired through a non-conscious absorption of ideas and feelings. A person is said to have a **positive attitude** towards music if he or she chooses to listen to music rather than to do something else such as read a book. A person would have a **negative attitude** towards objects, people, events or ideas if he or she avoided them. Attitude is a matter of personal choice.

Importance of Attitude Change

As a teacher, you may have observed that there is a great need for the people who are involved with children to change their attitude towards the victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime. These people may display a poor or negative attitude towards such children. They may feel that these children deserve what happened to them and, because the children were victims, that the traumatised children do not have any rights. Their attitude must change. They must realise that

traumatised children have the same rights as other children. They have the right to a childhood filled with love, caring and support and they have a right to a good education.

You cannot predict how people who deal with traumatised children may react. But if they have negative attitudes, it is imperative for a teacher to help them change their attitudes.

Many educators have noted that the attitudes of those around children can affect how, what and to what extent those children learn. Cole, Visser and Upton (1998), for example, argue that the quality of education in residential schools is clearly related to the experience, ability and commitment of the support staff.

If traumatised children are to learn successfully and become the best that they can be, then they should be supported by parents, teachers and other caregivers who have a positive attitude towards the children and the value of education.

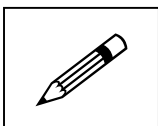
Parental Attitude

Parental attitude is crucial in the learning of children. Maintaining a positive attitude in parents is one of your key functions as a teacher.

It is important for you to be aware of some parental attitudes towards children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime. If you know and address these attitudes, you will be in a better position to guide and counsel the children. Attitudes that may be shown by parents of children with special educational needs are listed below:

- loss of respect for and trust in their affected children
- shame
- ambivalence – a mixture of love and hate
- depression
- self-pity
- defensiveness
- denial
- anger and aggression
- resignation to their situation.

If parents hold the above attitudes towards their children, the children may not feel valued. Consequently, the children may not see value in their life and may not care whether or not they go to school, or even whether they live or die.

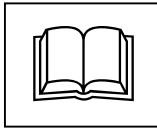


Self-Assessment 1

1. Why are the attitudes that parents have about their children important?

2. From your experience as a teacher, describe the attitudes that parents may have about their traumatised children.

Possible answers to this activity are at the end of this unit.



Factors Contributing to Teacher Attitude

The significance of the effect of teachers' attitudes has led researchers to examine the variables associated with attitude formation. Teacher attitudes are influenced by the following factors:

- Information level. The more information you have about the learners' background, the easier it will be for you to understand and appreciate their situation. You will also be in a better position to design appropriate learning activities.
- Contact and experience with children. The more contact you have with the learners, the easier it will be to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, you will be better able to select learning activities that address their needs.
- Specific skill acquisition and appropriate training. If you have the appropriate training and skills for dealing with traumatised children, you will be better able to care for them.

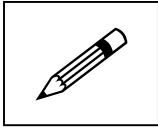
In order to teach effectively, you must have an understanding about those you are going to teach. If you have never taught traumatised children before, then you need to take the time to learn more about them in general and about your specific learners. When you have done this, it is likely that you will have a more positive attitude towards them.

Strategies for Improving Teacher Attitude

Mavugara (1995) argues that to address the issue of attitudes among teachers, attention must be given to the following items:

- There is great need for counselling workshops and full-time in-service training for teachers who deal with children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime.
- Teachers in all schools should be made aware of strategies for handling critical issues affecting these children.
- Schools should hold social activities, like sports, that bring all learners and teachers together.
- Various support services need to work hand-in-hand with teachers.
- Teachers need to know the various approaches to helping these traumatized children.

- Teachers' training colleges should incorporate in their programmes information about working with these types of children.



Self-Assessment 2

All teachers are expected to undergo some training in teaching traumatised children in order to prevent them from developing negative attitudes towards these children. To overcome this problem, teachers have met in the local school to map out ways to prevent negative attitudes from spreading. Cite some of the strategies that the teachers may suggest for dealing with this problem.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



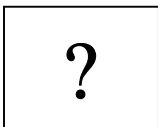
Summary

This unit has introduced you to issues concerning teacher and parental attitude. The unit has discussed the definition of attitude, the importance of attitude change among various support groups and the attitudes shown by parents of children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime. In addition, it has outlined factors that contribute to teacher attitude. It is hoped that, as you work with these traumatised children, the information in this unit will be helpful.



Reflection

Reflect on your attitude towards children in your school who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime. Is it positive, negative or ambivalent? How will you change your attitude towards traumatised children? How would you change the attitudes of various support groups?



Unit Test

1. How does the attitude of school support staff affect learners who have been traumatised?
2. What negative attitudes might be displayed by parents who have traumatised children?
3. What strategies could your school use to foster positive attitudes towards these children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

1. The parents' attitude affects how children perceive themselves. If the parents feel ashamed or have no respect for their children, the children may not have respect for themselves. Children are frequently mirrors of the world around them. When children feel poorly about themselves, they may feel that they can't learn and that even if they did get an education, it would be wasted on them. If parents have a positive view towards their children and education, it is likely that the children will hold similar views.
2. Please note that the answers to this activity will vary depending on your experience as a teacher of children with special educational needs.

Parents may exhibit the following attitudes about their traumatised children:

- denial that the traumatising events took place or that the children in their home are theirs
- shame, fear that the traumatic events have affected the family name
- anger
- ambivalence
- loss of respect for and trust in their children.

Self-Assessment 2

The teachers may suggest a variety of strategies for preventing the spread of negative attitudes. Some of these strategies are provided below:

- Obtain additional information about these types of students as well as their own pupils.
- Acquire specific skills for teaching traumatised children.
- Arrange to spend extra time with the children in order to get to know them better.
- Ask teachers who have extensive experience with these children to visit the classrooms of other teachers and provide advice.
- Ensure that all student files and discussions about them are kept confidential.
- Arrange for support groups to work hand-in-hand with teachers.

Unit Test

The answers to these questions will vary. However, you may wish to consider some of the points outlined below:

1. The attitude of school support staff has a direct effect on the learners. If the support staff are positive and caring individuals, then the children are likely to be positive. Children learn best in a positive, supportive environment.
2. Parents may display a variety of negative attitudes towards their traumatised children. A few of the attitudes which may be exhibited include:
 - shame,
 - anger,
 - pity,
 - ambivalence,
 - resignation or acceptance of the perceived bad situation, and
 - loss of respect and trust.
3. Below are a few suggestions, but there are others you could add to the list.
 - Teachers could meet regularly to discuss issues about traumatised children.
 - Experienced teachers could be assigned to these children.
 - Counselling sessions could be provided to various support groups.
 - Teachers could obtain the commitment of the support staff.
 - Support staff could be provided with appropriate training in handling children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime.
 - Support groups and teachers could work together to help these children.

UNIT 2: Challenges Posed by Children with Special Educational Needs



Introduction

Unit 1 discussed the following topics:

- the importance of attitude change
- parental attitude towards children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime
- factors contributing to negative attitudes
- strategies for fostering positive attitudes in teachers.

Unit 2 provides more information concerning the needs of traumatised children and what teachers can do to help these children.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the needs of children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime.
2. Explain why it is important to listen to traumatised children.
3. Discuss the importance of self-advocacy.

Needs of Victims of Sexual Abuse, Violence, War and Crime

You may be aware that children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime constitute a small fraction of children with special educational needs. Your duty as a teacher is to find out their needs. Although the plight of these children is sometimes discussed at school councils, associations or even during staff meetings, Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998) agree that the best way of finding out what children want is to listen to what they have to say.

Pupils need to feel that they belong to the school and their communities. If these children are to be empowered as learners, they need to feel that they belong to communities that listen to them and respond positively to their concerns. It is the responsibility of the community to ensure that the needs of all its members, including the needs of traumatised students, are addressed. The community must address issues related to the schooling of all its members.

Traumatised children have a variety of needs. For example, they may need to:

- be valued as human beings;
- overcome the shame that they feel has been brought upon them;
- overcome the anger or depression they feel as a result of their circumstances; and
- deal with their physical injuries that may have been the result of crime, violence or war.

The Importance of Listening to Children with Special Educational Needs

As a teacher of children with some special educational needs, you should be a good listener. The children will be free to tell you whether they are being abused or are unhappy about something. The problems that they encounter can only be revealed if they are free to express themselves to you. It is proper that their views be considered when decisions are taken about them.

Traumatized children have had their self-confidence and abilities undermined. Mason and Rieser (1995) emphasize that the needs of disabled students cannot be met unless they are given an opportunity to explain the personal implications of their disability. As the teacher, you should discuss with the pupils the sort of support they need. It is only through listening that you can understand:

- the children's thoughts and feelings,
- their needs, and
- their ability to change.

As indicated above, it is critical to listen to the children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, crime and war. The students may state that they want:

- a healthy life;
- to be able to express themselves spontaneously without thinking about all that has happened to them or what people may think;
- self-confidence;
- to have a zest or excitement for learning;
- a stable learning and caring environment;
- sociability, friendships and cooperation with others,
- equal opportunities regardless of their race, gender and disability; and
- family and community support.

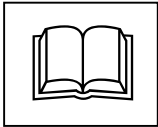
Does your community address all the needs identified above?



Self-Assessment 1

1. Why is it important to listen to children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime?
2. What do children with special needs want their school and community to provide?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Importance of Self-Advocacy

You may have realised that most decisions regarding traumatised learners are imposed without anyone consulting them. Mason and Rieser, as quoted by Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998), emphasize that the needs of disabled children cannot be met unless they are encouraged to explain how they are affected by their disabilities and discuss the support that they think they need.

Traumatised learners need to take part in making the decisions that will affect them. It is therefore important for you as a teacher of the children with special educational needs to allow them to express their thoughts about topics that concern them. Self-advocacy helps them:

- to make choices and decisions,
- to have clear knowledge and information about their rights,
- to make changes, and
- to express thoughts and feelings that affect them.



Self-Assessment 2

All teachers of traumatised children should allow their pupils to be open about themselves. What are some of the areas of concern that have been aired by children with special educational needs?

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

This unit has stressed that traumatised children have special needs. In order to determine their needs, you should listen to the children. You must encourage them to explain what has happened to them, how they feel, what they want and the type of support they require. They must be able to take part in decisions that affect them. We hope that as you teach these children, you will make every effort to understand them and help them to overcome challenges they face.



Reflection

Have you listened carefully to the traumatised students in your class? Did you let them state what their needs are? Did you involve them in making decisions that affect them?



Unit Test

1. Imagine that you have children with special educational needs in your school who are unmotivated and unhappy. Explain how you would help alleviate this situation.
2. Outline the areas in which children with special educational needs need help.

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

1. Unless the children tell you what their needs are, how will you know them? You may be able to guess what they are, but unless you ask the students, you will not know what they are feeling and why they are feeling it. The information that they provide will help you determine how you can best support them. By listening to the students, you will be able to:
 - identify the sexual abuse or violence they have encountered,
 - recognise the children's areas of disability,
 - determine the support they need,
 - understand their thoughts and feelings, and
 - know their needs.
2. These children would like their school and community to provide:
 - a climate or environment that allows for spontaneous expression;
 - friendship and cooperation;
 - equal opportunities regardless of race, gender and disability;
 - family support and community support;
 - happiness; and
 - a stable learning and caring environment.

Self-Assessment 2

There is no single right answer to this activity. However, you may wish to consider the suggestions below. Children with special educational needs have noted that they want to have:

- the ability to make choices and decisions,
- knowledge and information about their rights, and
- family and community support.

Unit Test

1. You may have noted the following in your answer:
 - Speak to the children and listen carefully to their needs.
 - Involve them in deciding how their needs can be met.
 - Identify areas in which the children need help.
 - Meet with other teachers to discuss how you can help them.

- Obtain support from the parents and community.
 - Provide a supportive, caring environment.
2. As a teacher of children with special educational needs, you may need to:
- help them deal with sexual abuse, violence or physical disability;
 - inform them of their rights; and
 - help them cope with the attitudes that they may face in the school and the community.

UNIT 3: Rights of Traumatized Children



Introduction

In the previous unit you were introduced to challenges posed by children with special educational needs. Your duty as a teacher is to ensure that these children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime feel that they belong to a community and that the community is interested in their education and general welfare. If you respect the rights of traumatized children, you can make it possible for them to obtain a quality education.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. State the basic rights of children who are victims of traumas.
2. Discuss the rights of children with special educational needs.
3. Describe the role of the collaborative team when dealing with children with special educational needs.

The Rights of Children with Special Educational Needs

As a teacher, you should know the rights of children. Children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime need to feel that they belong to the school, class and communities in which they live and that they have the right to confidentiality.

The laws and practices related to the rights of children vary from country to country. In some countries, parents of children who have been counselled on sexual matters can have access to their children's health records. However, allowing parents access to these records is a violation of children's rights to confidentiality. If these records are available to parents and others, the children may become distressed and distrustful of adults. You must determine what laws and policies pertain to your country. Although professional associations and local authorities may supply policies on confidentiality, the conditions are often vague. Sometimes you must rely on your own judgement about what is best for the learners in your class.

Children with special educational needs who are above the age of 14 years should have the following rights:

- The right to communicate in their own language.
- The right to have progress reports at least twice a year if the student asks for them.

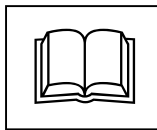
- The right to protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. (This is the right of all children, regardless of their age.)
- The right to be present and contribute at team meetings that involve planning for them.



Self-Assessment 1

Based on your experience as a teacher, list some of the rights of learners with special educational needs.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



The Right to Collaborative Teaming

As indicated above, your duty is to ensure that the children with special educational needs feel they belong to a community that is willing to address their needs. Therefore, it is necessary for you to be aware that these children have a right to collaborative learning that involves professionals from varying disciplines. The role of each member of the collaborative team is as follows:

- medical personnel – to diagnose and treat medical illnesses,
- physical and occupational therapists – to develop and implement interventions to enhance functional performance in purposeful activities,
- speech/language pathologists – to assess children's language and communicative competence,
- educators – to share information with the parents and involve them in the educational programme, and
- school psychologists – to assist in planning appropriate social, emotional, academic and behavioural intervention.

However, all of these individuals may not be available in your community. Even if they are available, financial resources may limit those that can be involved. If this is the case, you should use whatever resources are available to assemble a group of people to help your traumatised learners. Your basic team may comprise another teacher who has more experience than you do in helping these types of children, a medical professional and/or social worker and yourself.

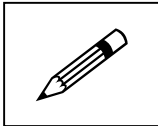
Basic Educational Rights of Victimised Children

Children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime have the right to an education. Education is an important function of the state and local authorities. The

compulsory education requirement in most countries and the great expenditure on education demonstrates its importance.

Education is a fundamental right of every child and this includes those with special educational needs. Denial of educational services to an individual impedes the acquisition of basic minimal skills and is, consequently, a denial of that person's constitutional rights.

Children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime have a right to appropriate classification and placement.



Self-Assessment 2

1. You know that learners within your class have a right to collaborative teaming. Name three professionals that could be involved and their roles.
2. Imagine that a new teacher has children with special educational needs in her class at your school. Enlighten the teacher on some basic rights of children with special needs.

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



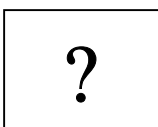
Summary

This unit has introduced you to the rights of children with special educational needs. The rights include the right to basic education and the right to collaborative learning. It is hoped that as you teach these children, you will always remember how important it is to respect their rights.



Reflection

Have you seen others violate children's rights? Have you violated the rights of learners in your class? If so, what are you going to do about it?



Unit Test

State any four rights of children with special educational needs that you think are crucial to their education and development.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

Please note that there are many possible answers to this activity. However, you may wish to consider the items below in your answer. Learners over the age of 14 have the right to:

- access progress reports,
- be present at team meetings that involve planning for them,
- communicate in their own language, and
- be protected from violence and sexual abuse.

Self-Assessment 2

1. Three collaborative team members and their roles are as follows:
 - medical personnel, who can diagnose and treat medical illnesses;
 - school psychologists, who can assess and plan appropriate social, academic and behavioural intervention; and
 - physical and occupational therapists, who can develop and implement interventions to enhance functional performance in purposeful activities.
2. Children with special educational needs have a right to:
 - assessment by a team of professionals,
 - an education,
 - progress reports,
 - communication in their own language,
 - participation in meetings that are being held to discuss their needs.

Unit Test

In your answer, you may want to consider the following rights:

- the right to an education;
- the right to an appropriate classification and placement;
- the right to assessments by various professionals; and
- the right to protection from all forms of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and violence.

UNIT 4: Intervention Strategies



Introduction

In the previous units, we dealt extensively with issues of special educational needs, with special reference to children who are victims of sexual abuse, war, crime and violence. This unit discusses possible intervention strategies you can consider when dealing with these traumatised children.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe how children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime can be integrated into mainstream schools.
2. Describe some support services that can benefit these children.
3. Explain how teachers can be trained to work with the children.

Introduction to Intervention Strategies

In your community, there may be a number of children with special educational needs who face major learning problems. The learning problems of these children may be attributed to several factors, including emotional distress, social isolation and stigma attached to their conditions.

As a teacher, you must find ways and means to address their needs. Some possible strategies are outlined in this module.

Mainstream Schools

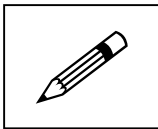
You may be aware that the early history of special education began with the opening of facilities for children with specified learning difficulties. These were children with hearing and visual impairments, mental retardation and physical disabilities. These children were taught separately and in isolation from the others. Over the years, we have seen a dramatic shift from this trend to what has been termed **mainstreaming** or integration.

You should note that the debate on whether these children should be placed in special institutions or be integrated into mainstream schools continues. Nevertheless, the critics of segregated education have argued that, among other things:

- it stigmatises children with special educational needs and that they are less stigmatised in ordinary classes,

- the children with learning disabilities make as much progress in the regular schools as they do in special education, and
- placing pupils in special classes or units is undesirable because it isolates them from other children in their community.

Having said that, it is important to caution that integration into mainstream schools will not be successful unless appropriate resources and facilities are provided. Hornby, Atkinson and Howard (1997) make reference to a survey conducted by Simpson and Myles regarding children with learning and behavioural difficulties. The parents of these children were willing to support integration provided that their children would be taught by adequately trained staff and that ongoing professional development would be made available for these teachers and assistants.



Self-Assessment 1

From your experience as a teacher, what would you say are the disadvantages of placing children with special educational needs in special institutions?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Available Support Service

You have already been made aware of the possible support services that can be used to address the needs of children who have been sexually abused as well as those who have been victims of war, crime and violence. A much more extensive description has been presented previously. Thus, this unit will only provide a brief outline of these services.

These support services can take different forms and may include:

- material support,
- professional support,
- medical support,
- community support,
- family support, and
- school support teams.

Material Support

Material support could be in different forms and from different sources. Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in your community may provide materials such as specialised books for use by teachers or the children themselves. They could also

provide support in the form of wheelchairs for children with physical disabilities. Material support could also come from the government or from overseas agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Professional Support, Including Medical Support

This support can be provided by private expertise and non-governmental organisations such as churches. Assistance can be provided to teachers in the form of specialised training that will enable them to counsel children irrespective of their status. Counselling can help children to accept each other regardless of their abilities or disabilities. As a teacher, you may already be aware of this type of professional support in your community and should, therefore, make the maximum use of any available services.

Medical support can be provided by doctors, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Support can also be provided by psychologists and psychotherapists who help people to deal with emotional and mental distress.

Community Support

As a teacher, you may have worked with the community in providing support to children with special educational needs. It is important that members of the community be provided with the skills that will enable them to support these children. Their support is paramount. However, you may need to address sensitive issues such as superstition that is embedded in the local culture. Superstitions and other cultural and religious beliefs may work against your efforts to integrate the affected children back into society.

Family Support

This is probably the most important support any disabled or traumatised child can ever get. Family members have brought up these children and live with them on a daily basis. They understand their whole history and can therefore offer the best support to the child. For them to provide this type of support, you may have to give them the necessary skills or obtain external support. You need to tell them how important their support is.

School Support Teams

Support teams comprising teachers, non-teaching staff and students could be established at schools. The members of the school community need to accept traumatised children as normal members of their community. Team members will need the right attitudes and appropriate skills to assist children who have been abused or have special needs for whatever reason. If these people can accept troubled children with their unique problems, then your role as a teacher will be much easier. You can refer to Module 5, Unit 7, for more information about school support teams.

Training of Teachers

In most of our schools, you may have noticed that there are children with special educational needs. While some of these will be easy to identify, others will be much more difficult to identify. Untrained or lay teachers may not be able to determine whether a child's behaviour or learning problems are related to trauma or stress. Therefore, school systems should provide some in-service training on special educational needs.

Traumatised children may have some characteristics that are not easy to identify. Even if they are identifiable, they may not be easy to address, hence the urgent need for you and others to take additional professional training. It is also important to give teachers training that can change their attitudes towards victimised children who may be causing problems in the classroom. The topic of teacher training will be dealt with as a separate unit later in this module.



Self-Assessment 2

Outline some types of support services for children with special educational needs.

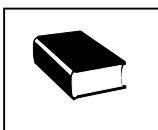
Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Practice Activity

Suppose you are the only teacher in your school trained to work with children who have special educational needs. Which groups in the school community would you ask to assist you? How would you prepare them for their new responsibilities?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

In this unit, you have been given insight into intervention strategies with which you can address the problems of children with special educational needs. The possible interventions introduced to you include mainstream schools, support services and the provision of special training for the teachers of these children. With this information at your disposal, you should always consider the alternatives available in addressing children's needs.



Reflection

Have you used any of the intervention strategies outlined in this unit? Are there strategies that you could use to address current challenges in your school?

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Unit Test

1. All teachers are expected to play a major role in assisting children who have been abused or neglected. For you to play this role more effectively, you need to find means of addressing their needs. Suggest some possible intervention strategies that you can use.
2. How would you go about training other teachers so that they can also have improved skills for working with children who have special educational needs?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

Critics of special institutions have advanced several reasons against them, but you can also consider the following:

- Institutionalisation stigmatises children with special educational needs. They are less stigmatised in ordinary classes.
- Children with learning disabilities make as much progress in regular schools as they do in special education.
- Placing pupils in special classes or units isolates them from other children in their community.

Self-Assessment 2

There could be several answers, but the following are good examples of support for children with special educational needs:

- professional support,
- medical support,
- community support,
- family support, and
- school support teams.

Practice Activity

In order to address the special needs of some of the learners, you could contact the groups below.

- teachers,
- non-teaching staff, and
- school children.

To prepare them to carry out their role, they could be encouraged and be provided with workshops that would help them change their attitudes towards children with special educational needs. They would also be equipped with some skills for helping these children overcome behaviour and learning problems.

Unit Test

1. The answers may vary, depending on your experience as a teacher, but the following points can also be considered:
 - integrating children with special educational needs into mainstream schools;

- providing support services such as material support, professional support, medical service, community support, family support and school teams; and
 - training teachers to give them skills for helping children with special educational needs.
2. In responding to this question, you can consider the following points:
- Provide teachers with in-service training to enable them to deal specifically with special educational needs.
 - Provide teachers with skills that will help them identify children with special educational needs.
 - Train teachers so that they can have a positive attitude towards these children.

UNIT 5: Strategies for Teaching Traumatised Children



Introduction

Unit 4 concentrated on intervention strategies that can be used to help teachers deal with traumatised children.

You might have realised that these children have unique characteristics and are very sensitive to their environment. Perhaps they will require different teaching strategies. Unit 5 provides information on the curriculum, teaching methods and resources used in teaching traumatised children.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Analyse the strategies that can be used to teach children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime.
2. Explain how the curriculum for such children should be designed.
3. Discuss the appropriateness of three strategies used to teach children who are victims of various traumas discussed in the module.

Curriculum

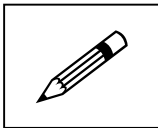
You may have wondered what you would teach to children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime. Although some of them will be emotionally disturbed or have physical disabilities, these factors should not prevent you from delivering the curriculum. The curriculum presented to them should not be different from that presented to the other children in your class. However, you may have to alter the curriculum to suit the levels and abilities of such children. The time needed to complete tasks may also be altered because the concentration span of these children may have been affected by their traumas.

Traumatised children may have learning difficulties, so your curriculum must be appropriate and flexible. You should ensure that the curriculum recognizes the children's experiences and attempts to overcome the negative effects of these experiences. In order to address the needs of these children, you need to assess the context and determine how relevant it is to them. You need to plan and assign enjoyable tasks that are realistic and challenging.

It should be remembered that children who are victims of traumas may view some parts of the curriculum as intimidating or uncomfortable. Therefore, they may develop negative attitudes towards the material. Your duty as a teacher is to make children understand the importance of learning that particular part of the curriculum. Try to make it interesting. Provide opportunities for success by giving tasks that are suitable to the level and abilities of the learners. It is vital to ensure that there is progression. Children who have experienced severe traumas need a positive and interactive atmosphere, and their efforts must be recognized and rewarded.

The curriculum should help to build the confidence and self-esteem of learners. It should provide opportunities for interaction, cooperation and communication.

As these children might have difficulties in using some apparatus, you may also need to cater to their different physical needs. This could include the use of reading cards and different book sizes. Some of the materials needed by these children are described in Module 5, Unit 7, “Provision of Support Services”.



Self-Assessment 1

How could your curriculum be adjusted to meet the needs of traumatised children? How would you change your instructional strategies?

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



Teaching Strategies

There are many teaching strategies that can be employed for use with children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime. They include group work, child-centred methods, project methods, pair work, practical work, drama, discussion and homework.

Because many of the children are likely to be emotionally distressed, they may need to work with others. Working with others will help them build social skills, self-esteem and confidence. This section covers some strategies you can use with such children.

Child-Centred Approach

This approach should underpin all the specific teaching strategies described below. In this approach, children are the focus of the learning process. The teacher is a guide and facilitator. Children learn independently and are responsible for their own learning. They search for information and share ideas

on activities they are working on. This approach gives children responsibility for managing their own learning. In order for this strategy to work successfully, the teacher must frequently guide and monitor the learners' progress and provide positive and helpful feedback.

Group Work

Working with others in a group gives children a chance to share ideas, materials and information. They can also collect information and books together. This method has been found useful because it encourages children to communicate and cooperate with each other, and this can lead to mutual respect. Children in a group learn to make their own decisions on given tasks. They also learn to tolerate and accept each other, which can be a good sign of behavioural change.

In group work, children share duties and responsibilities. This type of learning focuses on the learning of the whole group rather than on individuals. Children have the opportunity to challenge one another and therefore reach a compromise. The most encouraging factor would be that even the low achievers find themselves in a positive atmosphere when the group has achieved something. Group work is an active method of teaching that enables children to work at their own pace. To maximise the effectiveness of group methods, you must give clear instructions and challenging problems and develop appropriate group dynamics or practices in your learners.

Project Method

Like the child-centred approach, this method allows children to work on their own. Children choose a topic of their liking and study it with the help of the teacher. Children work on projects either in groups or as individuals. The method would help children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime to build their confidence through exploring different topics and having time to reflect on the information and their experiences. During a project, children have the opportunity to consider appropriate materials that can be used, make appropriate changes in the project and plan for future developments. Learning through critical reflection could help victimised children to think critically about their traumas and make sense of them, thereby developing new ideas and values.

Discussion Method

In this method, children have the opportunity to work together with the teacher. It was indicated earlier that traumatised children usually have some learning problems. For example, they might have a short attention span. This method would be effective in such cases because it does not take a long time provided that it is well planned and controlled. Learners will also not be engaged in writing, which they may find tiring and difficult. The teacher needs to be careful in selecting a topic for discussion, as some topics can be sensitive. Discussion topics

can be useful to help children open up and talk about situations in which they find themselves. If the topic is interesting, the learners' participation will be high.

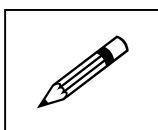
Using Practical Activities

When teaching children who have gone through traumas, you should not forget that they are human beings and would like to be involved in practical activities. Such involvement might help them to gain confidence. For example, being allowed to cook in the kitchen may challenge them and give them a sense of self-worth. Practical work done outside the classroom can also yield very positive rewards. Children can go out and interview kitchen staff and discuss some recipes. You could put your theoretical subjects into practice. Children could also participate in outdoor sports and games. This way, they enjoy themselves and get some exercise.

Drama

Drama can be one method of teaching that might help children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime. During drama activities, children can show their feelings. They can cooperate and collaborate with each other. In most cases, if there is reading to be done, the reading consists of short sentences, so children who are emotionally distressed can cope. If used appropriately, drama can be a very useful tool for the traumatised children, as it allows them to vent bottled-up frustrations and stress.

Even though these methods can be good with children who are victims of traumas, they have some disadvantages of which you should be aware. When using these methods, you should be careful not to give children too much freedom because this might result in uncontrolled behaviour. This not only disrupts the classroom and disturbs other learners, but also makes the traumatised children feel insecure.



Self-Assessment 2

Based on your experience as a teacher, what method do you think would be most appropriate to deal with children who are victims of sexual abuse and violence? Name the method, describe it and explain why you think it would be most appropriate.

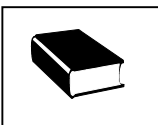
Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Practice Activity

You have been transferred to a new school where you are given a group of students who are victims of war. You are aware that they have physical and emotional difficulties. Explain how you would facilitate their learning.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



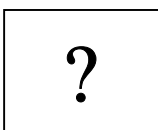
Summary

This unit provided you with information on different ways you can teach children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime. It explained how the curriculum may be altered to suit the level and ability of such children and discussed some techniques that could be used to teach them. We hope that, now that you have worked through this unit, you are better prepared to work with traumatised children.



Reflection

Reflect on the methods of teaching that you practise. Think of how you could adapt them to teach children with special educational needs.



Unit Test

1. What strategies can be employed to teach children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime? Briefly describe each method.
2. What must you be careful NOT to do when employing any of the above strategies?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

You could adjust the curriculum and delivery methods by:

- selecting topics that are appropriate for learners who have experienced trauma;
- adjusting the time spent on each activity, as their attention span may be limited;
- ensuring that your curriculum is flexible, challenging and interesting;
- exploring and including the experiences of the children in your lessons;
- adjusting tasks to the level and experience of the learners;
- developing a positive and interactive atmosphere in the class; and
- helping students with physical disabilities to use equipment or adjusting the equipment to meet their capabilities.

Self-Assessment 2

There are a number of methods that could be employed to benefit these types of children. These methods include the child-centred approach, group work, the project method, the discussion method and practical activities like field trips and drama.

Below is a detailed description of one of the above methods.

Group work allows children to work together. The work they produce should be a product of joint participation. When using this method, children:

- work in manageable groups,
- work together on one activity,
- are placed in either social or ability groups,
- share ideas and materials,
- are actively involved, and
- cooperate and communicate.

Practice Activity

Your experience as a teacher would have taught you to use different approaches. Nevertheless, try the following approaches.

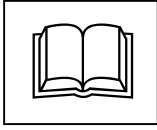
You can first try to make these children comfortable in the class by giving them a chance to discuss a topic among themselves.

Then you could interact with them by leading the discussion. Ask some questions in order to help them open up. The discussion between you and the children may help the traumatised children to relax and freely express their feelings.

Unit Test

1. There are several strategies that you can employ:
 - Child-centred approach: children learn to work independently and become responsible for their own learning.
 - Project method: children work on topics that interest them.
 - Discussion method: with the guidance of the teacher, students discuss various topics.
 - Group work: students work in groups to share ideas, materials and information.
 - Drama: students have an opportunity to act and to express their feelings.
 - Practical activities: children do activities and tasks that are relevant to them.
2. When employing any of the above methods, the teacher must be careful NOT to:
 - frustrate the learners by giving them tasks that may be beyond their abilities,
 - overwhelm the learners by giving them too much freedom,
 - spend a lot of time on topics that are sensitive to the students, or
 - place students in an uncontrolled environment.

UNIT 6: Behaviour Modification



Introduction

Unit 5 covered teaching strategies that you could use with children who are victims of violence, sexual abuse, war and crime. Some of the approaches that could be used are:

- the child-centred approach,
- group work,
- the project method, and
- the discussion method.

This unit on behaviour modification discusses some techniques that you can use to help children with special educational needs.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define behaviour modification.
2. Describe some behaviour modification techniques.
3. Explain the school's responsibility in modifying children's behaviour.
4. State the factors to consider when using reinforcers in behaviour modification.

Definition of Behaviour Modification

As a teacher whose students include children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime, you can appreciate that for these children to be effective, some behaviour modification techniques may have to be used in their lessons. From the very beginning, it is critical that you understand what behaviour modification means.

Behaviour modification is a process in which some observable behaviour is changed by the systematic application of techniques that are based on learning theory and experimental research (Cooper, Smith and Upton, 1994).

You may have read about Pavlov's classic experiment, in which the response of salivation was conditioned in dogs to become not only a natural response to food, but also eventually a conditioned reflex to an associated stimulus. Pavlov (1927) reached the conclusion that training, education and discipline of any sort were conditioned reflexes.

Many researchers have concluded that a behaviour that results in a pleasant consequence will be reinforced and likely to be repeated, while behaviour that is followed by an unpleasant consequence is likely to diminish.

Behaviour Modification Techniques

As a teacher, you have to modify your pupils' behaviour. You can do this through a technique called modelling. Yelon and Weinstein (1977) define **modelling** as learning from an example that the child observes. Children are less likely to imitate modelled behaviour if they expect punishment for doing so. Yelon and Weinstein (1977) point out that imitated behaviour is not always good behaviour. Aggression, because it is easily seen and because it usually gets a reaction, is frequently imitated. Violence in itself creates a model. Imitation could also take place when an aggressive model is televised.

Another behaviour modification technique is shaping. **Shaping** involves rewarding any actions that lead or contribute to the desired behavioural goal. For example, if you want a restless student to remain in his seat for an entire lesson, you begin to shape his behaviour by praising him for sitting still for 10 minutes.

Positive reinforcement involves giving praise or tangible rewards to indicate approval. You can reinforce desirable behaviour by commenting favourably on a child's work or behaviour or by awarding tokens such as stars or points.

You may be aware that most behaviourist approaches emphasise positive reinforcement and turn to punishment reluctantly as a last resort. Punishment may be used with children who are violent in class. In punishment, rules are specified and there are consequences such as the loss of privileges for children who break them.



Self-Assessment 1

From your experience as a teacher, which three behaviour modification techniques do you think would have an effect on the behaviour of a violent pupil in your class?

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



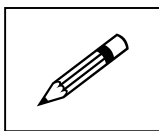
The School's Responsibility in Modifying Children's Behaviour

You may have observed a lot of misbehaviour occurring in schools that have children with special educational needs. The range of experience that the schools provide affects not only

their academic performance, but also the social and emotional states of these children.

There are characteristics within a school which appear likely to influence pupils' behaviour positively:

- shared staff policy on academic and behavioural expectations,
- good leadership by support services that are sensitive to the opinion of the parents and pupils,
- a curriculum that is matched to the learners' present and future needs,
- academic expectations which are high but not unreasonable,
- an emphasis on effective use of rewards for good behavior,
- high professional standards in planning and marking the students' work, and
- opportunities for learners to become involved in the running of the school.



Self-Assessment 2

What characteristics have positively influenced pupil behaviour in your school?

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



Factors to Consider When Using Reinforcers in Behaviour Modification

When you are using reinforcers with children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime, there are a number of factors to consider:

- The positive reinforcers should be presented immediately following the appropriate behaviour.
- For behaviour modification techniques to be effective, the reinforcers must be something the children want or need, such as praise or tokens.
- Teachers have to be very creative in applying behaviour modification techniques.



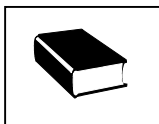
Practice Activity

1. Teachers of children with special educational needs are expected to modify the children's behaviour in their schools. In order to do this effectively, you have to identify children whose behaviour needs to be modified. Describe some of the

common misbehaviours in your school that should be modified.

2. Imagine that you have a violent child in your class who is very disturbed and is not interested in schoolwork. Explain how you would attempt to modify the child's behaviour.
3. If you choose to use reinforcers, what factors should you consider?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

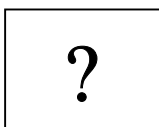
This unit has introduced you to behaviour modification techniques that can be used with traumatised children. The school's responsibility and the factors to consider when implementing behaviour modification techniques were discussed.

We hope that, as you perform your duties as a teacher, you will keep in mind the behaviour modification techniques that you can employ so that you have a positive atmosphere in your classroom.



Reflection

Reflect on your performance as a teacher of children who are violent in your class. Think of how you might modify their behaviour, given the insights gained from this unit.



Unit Test

1.
 - a. Identify three methods you can use to modify behaviour.
 - b. Indicate which method you are likely to use with students who are violent or abusive in class.
 - c. Which method involves the children observing good behaviour?
2. Describe three ways that you can create a positive learning environment in your school.
3. Outline the factors to consider when using reinforcers with children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime.

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

Please note that answers to this activity will vary depending on your experience as a teacher. However you may wish to consider:

- modelling,
- shaping, and
- punishment.

Self-Assessment 2

You may wish to consider the following items:

- good leadership by support services that are sensitive to the opinion of parents and pupils,
- high professional standards in planning and marking the students' work,
- opportunities for pupils to become involved in the running of the school, and
- a curriculum which is matched to the learners' present and future needs.

Practice Activity

1. There is no single right answer to this activity. However, you may wish to consider some of the following:
 - pupils becoming violent with each other,
 - use of abusive language,
 - engaging in fights, and
 - insulting each other.
2. You may consider the following points in your answer:
 - instruct,
 - demonstrate,
 - make use of prompting techniques, and
 - provide positive reinforcement if the child's behaviour changes.
3. When using reinforcers, you should consider the following:
 - Positive reinforcements should be presented immediately following the appropriate behaviour.
 - Be creative in behaviour modification techniques.
 - Make use of effective reinforcers if this technique is to succeed.

Unit Test

1. a. Three methods of behaviour modification that you can use in the classroom are as follows:
 - modelling
 - shaping
 - positive reinforcement.
 - b. Your answer will depend on your teaching situation. You may wish to consider the following:
 - Modelling: demonstrating your own tolerance, kindness and generosity towards students and colleagues.
 - Shaping: praising your students for actions that lead to desired behaviours.
 - Positive reinforcement: rewarding students for good behaviour and punishing only as a last resort.
 - c. Modelling involves the children observing the good behaviour of their teachers.
2. You may wish to consider the following suggestions:
 - Provide positive role models for the students.
 - Match the curriculum to students' needs.
 - Set reasonable academic expectations.
 - Emphasise rewards for good behaviour.
 - Establish high professional standards for staff in planning and marking students' work.
 - Provide opportunities for students to be involved in the running of the school.
 3. Some of the factors to consider:
 - Present positive reinforcers immediately following the appropriate behaviour.
 - Use effective reinforcers.
 - Be creative in varying the reinforcers according to the situation and the individual child.

UNIT 7: Pre-Service Training



Introduction

In Modules 5 and 6, much information was given about special educational needs with special reference to traumatised children. The roles played by individuals, communities and organisations were also discussed. Unit 8 of Module 5, for instance, described the role of parents in addressing the needs of such children.

Unit 4 of Module 6 focused on the role of support services in meeting special educational needs. Services such as professional support, community support, family support and school support teams were cited as playing a central role in this endeavour. The vital contribution by individual teachers is highlighted in Modules 5 and 6.

Another critical area in special educational needs is pre-service training. Unit 7 describes what pre-service training can do to address special educational needs. It discusses, among other things, the importance of pre-service training approaches, training strategies, the role of students and partnership with the community.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the concept of pre-service training.
2. Explain why pre-service training is important.
3. Identify approaches that can be used for initial training.
4. Outline strategies that teachers can use to handle children in class.
5. Explain the roles of student teachers and institutions in the production of teaching and learning aids.
6. Discuss the partnership between pre-service training and the community.

Pre-Service Training

This is the type of training that could also be referred to as initial training provided at pre-service institutions such as colleges of education or universities. Pre-service training gives teachers the opportunity to learn about children with special educational needs before they start teaching. According to Sayer and Jones (1985: 78), the initial training is the first of several steps towards learning to be an effective practitioner.

Importance of Pre-Service Training

Unit 8 of this module addresses skill development that will enable serving teachers to assist children who have special educational needs. However, teachers who are being in-serviced may already be used to certain methods of teaching that they may not want to abandon in order to adopt something different. In other words, they feel much more comfortable with what they already know and may view any change with resistance or apprehension.

One of the benefits of pre-service training is that it exposes the teacher trainee to special educational needs at a much earlier stage. Sayer and Jones (1985: 78) argue that, at this stage of training, certain values are incorporated which can sustain practice even when teachers are confronted with staff-room scepticism.

Early exposure gives trainees enough time to get acquainted with new materials and special expertise required to handle children with special educational needs. It prepares them to go to the schools with the right attitude, ready to apply techniques for teaching and managing children who have learning and behaviour problems. According to Sayer and Jones (1985), initial training has many tasks, including:

- building confidence and skill for immediate roles, such as teaching practice and first appointments;
- developing a number of perspectives on the teachers' role and the way the education system operates; and
- making the trainee aware of a range of issues such as multi-cultural education, gender and counselling.

Having looked at the importance of pre-service training, we will now describe strategies that institutions may adopt in their teacher training programmes.

Training Approaches

Individual institutions may be pursuing several approaches in the training of teachers for children with special educational needs. There is actually a debate as to whether initial training in special education should focus on awareness, be based on practical classroom skills, combine both approaches, or be integrated into training programmes as a whole.

Proponents of the integration of special needs in training argue against awareness courses on the grounds that they do not appear to meet teachers' needs. Colin Smith, as quoted by Sayer and Jones (1985), points to a survey of teacher trainees. Their reaction was that, beyond awareness, they required courses that would prepare them to help slow learners and other children with special educational needs. Awareness does not provide teachers with skills they can use with these

children. Furthermore, such awareness courses may not promote positive attitudes towards these children.

An alternative approach is the introduction of specific courses on special educational needs. This would be a distinct and separate programme specifically for students who, after completion, would be teaching children with special educational needs. This alternative has also been criticised by some scholars.

The integration of special needs in training programmes as an alternative seems to be receiving more approval, even though this approach has its own weaknesses. One advantage it has over the other alternatives is that it has the capacity to introduce most, if not all, trainees to special educational needs. Unlike awareness training, the integration approach provides more depth of content and can also help teachers to vary their teaching methods. This would prepare trainees to teach in mainstream schools, where many children with special educational needs have not been given the support they deserve.

Having explained the different approaches that can be employed at initial training, it is important that we briefly discuss the different strategies that teachers can employ in a class comprising children with different learning abilities. You will recall that some strategies were identified in Unit 5 of this module.

Teaching Strategies

Group Work

In a mainstream class, it is up to the teacher to decide which approach to use in order to address the different learning abilities of children. Given such a class of children, the teacher may choose to mix the groups so that the able children can work with the less able ones. Alternatively, the teacher can group them according to their learning abilities and give tasks that suit the different learning groups.

An advantage of using mixed groups is that the able children can help the less able. It is important to note that children tend to understand better when they are assisted by their peers. Another strength of this strategy is that the less able children will not feel isolated or embarrassed if they perform badly.

The disadvantage, of course, is that if the teacher is not careful, the able children can dominate group discussions to the detriment of their peers.

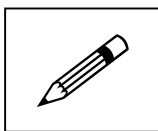
Grouping children according to their learning abilities gives them the opportunity to work at their own pace. It is unlikely in this instance that some children will dominate others. The

danger, in particular with the less able children, is that they may be left behind by their colleagues. Another problem is that they may feel isolated and stigmatised. Therefore, you should be careful in deciding the composition of the groups.

Role Play and Drama

Role play and drama can play a very crucial role, especially in speech development. Again, the teacher needs to be careful that the more able children do not dominate. Furthermore, in encouraging all to participate, care should be taken to prevent the less able children from being ridiculed. If carefully used, role play and drama can help in particular those children whose feelings have been badly hurt by traumatic events. It is during such activities that they can express their hurt feelings and, therefore, help you to see how best you can assist them. Again, role play and drama offer children opportunities to collaborate and confide in each other.

For more examples of strategies, review Unit 5 of Module 6. Ensure that you look at both the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy. Whatever strategy you adopt in teaching children, make sure that it recognises their different learning abilities.



Self-Assessment 1

Choose one strategy you can use in an integrated class and explain its advantages.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Production of Learning and Teaching Materials

Once special educational needs have been considered in the curriculum, it is imperative that institutions produce materials that can meet these needs. If these issues are included in the various subjects or courses offered, then relevant materials should be made available for use by teachers who have students with special educational needs.

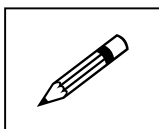
It would even be more appropriate if the trainees themselves could be taught how to produce materials relevant to the different learning groups they will encounter. In addition, they should be given the opportunity to visit schools and try their materials in real situations. These materials could include handouts, worksheets and appropriate learning and teaching aids.

Partnership between Pre-Service Institutions and the Community

There is now a move towards the establishment of partnerships between schools and communities in an effort to address the

needs of children. Today we live in a world in which parents would like to play a major role in making decisions that affect their children's education. It is therefore important that institutions that are responsible for the training of teachers should take the initiative in establishing partnerships with parents.

In establishing this partnership, institutions will get to know what problems these children have. Frequent home visits by education students could be arranged to allow them to have contact with parents and an insight into what lies ahead of them when they join the teaching profession. Parents, too, may be given the opportunity to contribute to the curriculum for children with special educational needs. Furthermore, they will have a chance to make suggestions regarding strategies that can be pursued to address the various special educational needs of their children. Earlier in Unit 4 of Module 6, the role of parents in supporting abused children was emphasised. However, parents may not be capable of helping their children unless they are given some guidance. It is important, therefore, that training institutions provide that expertise to parents. This expertise could be offered to parents by both the lecturers and the trainees.



Self-Assessment 2

As a teacher, you are also a member of the community, and you have been concerned that the college of education in your village is not preparing trainees to alleviate the plight of children with learning difficulties. Give two reasons why you think pre-service training has an important role to play in meeting special educational needs.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Practice Activity

Imagine that parents in your community have established a partnership with the village college of education. What do you think would be the advantages of such a partnership?

The possible answers to this activity are at the end of this unit.



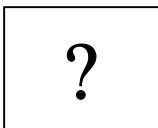
Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to issues on pre-service training in relation to special educational needs. The issues that have been discussed include the importance of pre-service training, training strategies, the production of teaching and learning materials and partnership between the pre-service training institutions and the community.



Reflection

Reflect on the role played by training institutions in preparing teachers to work with children who have special educational needs. Consider how their role can be improved to make a meaningful contribution in assisting these children.



Unit Test

1. What can pre-service training teach education students about children with special educational needs?
2. Explain some of the disadvantages of awareness courses.
3. Group work can be a successful teaching strategy. What concerns should you be aware of when you ask children with special educational needs to participate in a group?
4. What are the two primary benefits of using role play and drama with children who have been traumatised?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

The advantages of mixed group work:

- It enables the more able children to help the less able ones.
- Children tend to understand better when assisted by their peers.
- The less able children do not feel isolated or embarrassed if they perform poorly.

Advantages of heterogeneous groups:

- Children can work at their own pace.
- Domination by other children is minimised.
- Children may be less likely to look down upon each other.

Advantages of role play and drama:

- They can play a crucial role in speech development.
- They can help traumatised children by allowing them to express painful emotions.
- They offer children opportunities to collaborate and to confide in each other.

Self-Assessment 2

You may provide any two of the answers below:

Pre-service training has an important role to play because it:

- gives trainees time to get acquainted with new material and the special expertise required to assist children with special educational needs,
- provides trainees an opportunity to change their attitude towards children with special educational needs, and
- gives trainees confidence and develops skills for practice teaching and their first appointment.

Practice Activity

Possible answers to the activity may include the following:

- Parents would have a say in decisions affecting their children, for example, they may be asked to contribute to a curriculum review.
- Lecturers and students can share ideas and experiences on how best to assist the children.
- Parents may receive training and guidance on supporting children with special educational needs.

Unit Test

Possible answers to the unit test are provided below:

1. Pre-service training can provide education students with:
 - an awareness of learners with special educational needs,
 - strategies that they can use with these children,
 - confidence and skill building so that they are prepared to teach and assist these students, and
 - an understanding of how the education system operates and addresses the needs of these children.
2. Awareness courses:
 - do not appear to meet teachers' educational needs, and
 - may not change the attitudes of the teachers-in-training.
3. When children work in a group, you must ensure that:
 - some children do not dominate the session,
 - children with weaker skills are not left behind,
 - learners within the groups are not embarrassed or isolated, and
 - the topic or activity that they are working on is appropriate and enjoyable.
4. Role play and drama:
 - can further speech development, and
 - allow learners to express their feelings.

UNIT 8: In-Service Training



Introduction

In the previous units, you learned why it is necessary to provide in-service training to teachers. This unit provides a more extensive discussion of this topic.

Throughout the unit, the concept of in-service training may be used interchangeably with the term 'staff development'. The unit further explains the importance of in-service training, mainly in relation to the integration of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream setting. Other areas of concern to be covered in this unit are training strategies, types of workshops and evaluation.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define the concept of in-service training.
2. Outline the aims of in-service training.
3. Explain why in-service training is important.
4. Describe strategies for identifying teachers' needs.
5. Identify the types of in-service training opportunities available.
6. Discuss evaluation programmes.

What Is In-Service Training?

Scholars have defined the concept of in-service training or staff development in different ways. The definition given by Bell and Day (1991: 164) seems most relevant to our situation. They describe **in-service training** as "a planned process of development which enhances the quality of pupil learning by intensifying, clarifying and meeting the individual need of the teaching staff within the context of the school as a whole".

Similarly, Matheson (1991: 172) describes **staff development** as "the activity of staff training that is in a conscious institutional process intended to improve the capability of staff to fulfil specified roles, particularly in relation to teaching".

These definitions show that in-service training is paramount to the development of individual skills for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

Aims of In-Service Training

The primary aim of in-service training depends on the needs of the school. As a teacher, you may have already been involved in some in-service training programmes for specific reasons unique to your school. However, the following aims could apply to in-service training about children with special educational needs:

- To recognise and employ staff strengths and to seek the best teaching practices.
- To identify staff needs.
- To serve the educational needs of the schools.

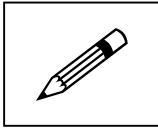
With these aims in mind, it is important to note that the major reason you should be trained is to improve your effectiveness as a teacher of children with special educational needs. Staff development should be seen as a continuing process and part of the whole school plan rather than just another additional school activity (Bulawa, 1994).

Importance of In-Service Training

There is currently great importance attached to the in-service training of teachers who must cope with traumatised children. Several reasons for this renewed interest in in-service are provided below:

- Teachers need skills that will enable them to deal with pupils in mainstream settings who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Teachers need skills that will enable them to cope with and adjust to curriculum changes.
- Teachers need training that will enable them to cope with the rapid increase in the number of children with diverse special educational needs.
- Teachers should be given a chance, through in-service training, to become acquainted with new material and the special expertise required to work with children with special educational needs.
- Pre-service training alone is not adequate to prepare teachers of children with special educational needs.

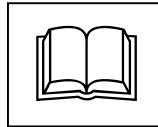
As a teacher, you should be aware of the need for a school to develop its staff to be effective and efficient in addressing the needs of traumatised children. This is increasingly important as teachers in general may be unprepared by their initial training to work with such children. Effective staff development can be realised only if teachers are involved in identifying areas of concern. Training that is imposed on teachers may be unacceptable to them.



Self-Assessment 1

You may already be aware of the importance of in-service training programmes. Explain what you would consider to be the value of in-service training to teachers of students with special educational needs.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Strategies for Identifying Needs

A needs analysis survey for teachers who handle special educational needs or any other programme is central to the in-service training planning process. As a teacher, you may be aware that you lack certain important skills and, therefore, need the training in order to fill some gaps. In order to determine the needs of teachers, you could use:

- interviews,
- staff meetings,
- appraisal activities, or
- questionnaires.

Interviews could involve face-to-face interaction between the person responsible for the particular in-service training programme and individual teachers. The goal is to identify their individual needs. These interviews should be held in a relaxed atmosphere, allowing the teachers being interviewed to express themselves freely (Bulawa, 1994).

Staff meetings enable teachers to come together to discuss the needs of the whole school and express how they feel about their staff development activities.

Appraisals should play a central role in the assessment of teachers' needs, as they can serve a number of purposes. Assessments can be used to:

- discover the teachers' needs,
- develop the individuals' teaching skills,
- monitor performance,
- motivate staff, and
- plan future staff training needs.

It is important to note, however, that appraisals must be handled with special care. For instance, if the appraiser or the person who is conducting the appraisal does not have the necessary skills to conduct it, then the person being questioned (frequently known as the appraisee) might perceive the appraisal as threatening. The appraisee's perceptions could negatively affect the intended outcome.

If properly designed, a **questionnaire** could be used to identify needs. It provides teachers with the opportunity to express their needs in writing. Questionnaires can also be used to complement discussion in such contexts as staff meetings and training workshops.

According to Dean, cited in Bulawa (1994), there are several ways to ensure that questionnaires are returned. One way is to distribute questionnaires during staff meetings and allow time for completion so that they can be collected at the end of the meeting. Alternatively, you can distribute them and ask teachers to complete and return them on their own time.

When all the information is collected, the person responsible for the intended training programme should discuss the identified needs with the teachers and map out future directions.

Types of In-Service Training Programmes Available

The training of teachers can be conducted in a number of ways. You may be familiar with those listed below:

- school-based in-service training such as workshops, seminars, peer class observations or team teaching;
- external activities;
- cooperating with other schools in activities such as linkage and exchange visits; and
- distance learning programmes.

A brief description of various types of in-service training is provided below.

School-Based In-Service Training

Central to the provision of staff development is school-based in-service support. Its importance arises from the fact that it is frequently more relevant to the needs of the school and the children themselves. It allows you to work together with other teachers in your school to develop professionally as well as to improve learning. You are able to observe one another and also share ideas and whatever material is available on the children for whom you are responsible.

External Activities

While school-based in-service support is encouraged, in-service activities organised out of school are equally important. These could be provided by experts from the community or other parts of the country and may include in-service providers and teachers from other schools. This gives you the opportunity to discuss topics and share ideas and experiences with other teachers and in-service providers. External activities expose you to new information about children with special educational needs.

Cooperation with Other Schools

As a teacher, you may meet occasionally with teachers from other schools, particularly those in the neighbourhood, to discuss issues relating to the needs of the children. You may find that these teachers have students with disabilities similar to those of students in your class. They may be able to suggest successful strategies that you could use. Cooperating with other schools gives you opportunities to gather as much helpful information as possible.

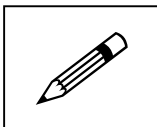
Distance Learning

There may be some distance learning activities in which you wish to participate. This form of learning has several strengths. For example, you do not have to leave your work. You can work at home or at school to complete the distance learning activities. They may also enable you to take advantage of learning materials such as videocassettes, radio and television programmes and a variety of books.

Evaluation Programme

A common feature of the provision of in-service support is evaluation. Evaluation provides evidence about the effectiveness of the programme. It would be advisable to include some evaluation in each part of the programme and to evaluate the whole programme at specific intervals. As a teacher, you may have already been involved in evaluation. However, while evaluation can be entrusted to the teachers themselves, evaluations by external experts may prove to be more objective and independent than evaluations carried out by the 'owners' of the programme.

Evaluation gives teachers the opportunity to make decisions such as whether to continue, modify or replace a programme, whether to continue with or replace a tutor or officer and whether or not to include greater teacher participation.



Self-Assessment 2

As a teacher, you may have participated in several in-service programmes. List the types of in-service training programmes you are aware of.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Practice Activity

1. You may already have conducted some school-based in-service programmes for teachers in your school. What would you say are the major aims of an in-service training programme based on special educational needs?
2. Imagine you are a teacher responsible for staff development in the school. Explain what advantages school-based in-

service training has over other types of in-service support programmes.

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



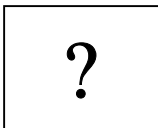
Summary

Educational institutions mount in-service or staff development programs so that they can improve the capability of teachers and thereby improve teaching methods and the learning environment. In order to identify the training needs of teachers, interviews, staff meetings, appraisal activities and questionnaires can be conducted or administered. Once the needs are identified, a variety of in-service programs can be arranged. For example, the training could be held within the school using its own resources or the teachers may be able to participate in external activities mounted by experts or teachers in other schools. All in-service programs should be evaluated for their effectiveness.



Reflection

Consider how in-service support can be used to facilitate learning for children with special educational needs. What kind of additional training do you need? Do other teachers in your community or school need similar training? How can you establish a training programme that will assist them as well as yourself?



Unit Test

1. Explain two types of in-service training you may consider using in your programmes.
2. Why should staff development programmes be evaluated?

Possible answers to this test are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

There is no specific set of answers to this activity, but the following examples could be cited.

- Teachers need skills that will enable them to work with pupils who have problems such as emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream settings.
- Teachers need skills that will enable them to cope with and adjust to curriculum changes.
- Teachers need training that will enable them to cope with the rapid increase in the number of children with special educational needs.
- Teachers should be given a chance, through in-service training, to get acquainted with new material and to acquire the expertise required to respond to children with special educational needs.

Self-Assessment 2

You may consider the following points for your answer:

- school-based in-service training such as workshops, seminars, peer-class observation and team teaching;
- external activities;
- cooperating with other schools in activities such as linkages and exchange visits;
- distance learning programmes;
- workshops; and
- seminars.

Practice Activity

1. The major aims of in-service training are to:
 - recognise and employ staff strengths and to seek the best teaching practices,
 - identify staff needs, and
 - serve the school's educational needs.
2. There is no single right answer to this second practice activity. However, school-based in-service:
 - can be more relevant to the needs of the school and the children,
 - can allow teachers to work together to develop professionally and improve learning, and

- can provide opportunity for teachers to observe one another and share ideas and materials.

Unit Test

1. There is no single answer to this activity, but the following are some examples of in-service training that can be cited.
 - School-based in-service training is very important for several reasons, including relevance to the needs of the school and children. This type of training allows teachers to work together to develop professionally and improve learning. In addition, it gives teachers the chance to share ideas and materials.
 - Activities could be provided by external experts. These give teachers the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with others outside of their own school.
 - Cooperating with other schools provides teachers, particularly those in the same neighbourhood, an opportunity to discuss issues relating to special educational needs.
 - Distance learning exposes teachers to other forms of materials such as videocassettes and TV programmes. Teachers are able to work at home at their own pace.
2. Staff development programmes should be evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the programmes and their contributions to improving the skills of the teachers.

Module Test

1.
 - a. List three kinds of attitudes that might be displayed by parents of children who are victims of sexual abuse, violence, war and crime.
 - b. How might a teacher try to change the negative attitudes that parents of traumatised children may have regarding their sons or daughters?
2. Why is it important to listen to children who have special educational needs?
3. What rights do traumatised learners have? Are they the same rights that other students have? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Discuss the advantages of integrating children with special educational needs in mainstream schools instead of isolating them in special institutions.
5. Describe the role that members of a school team can play in providing support to children with special educational needs.
6. List three school characteristics that can influence positive behaviour in children.
7. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of four teaching strategies that you could use with traumatised learners.
8. Briefly explain the following behaviour modification techniques and indicate any cautions that should be taken when they are implemented:
 - Modelling
 - Shaping
9. What role does in-service training play in preparing teachers to cope with children who have special educational needs?
10. What are the advantages of partnership between a pre-service institution and the community in supporting children with special educational needs?

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